



Marilyn Rasmussen

Second District



Committees: Senate Agriculture; Senate Education; Senate Rules;
Joint Select Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs

Sen. Marilyn Rasmussen with Tiffany Chauwin of Yelm, who served as a Senate page during the 2003 legislative session.

I'm always here for you!

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Basic Health Plan:

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Dear Neighbors,

The biggest challenge facing the 2003 Legislature was to balance the state budget, which we are required by state law to do, and at the same time come up with a plan to stimulate our state's struggling economy and create new jobs.

The Legislature filled a \$2.6 billion gap in the general fund budget **without a general tax increase**. To avoid any general tax increase, we cut hundreds of millions in state spending. Every department and agency in the state was required to reduce expenses.

As we deliberated on these choices, my first priority was to protect K-12 education and birth through six community services. The future depends on our youth, and they deserve an excellent education. My goal was to shield our classrooms from cuts.

We were forced to make reductions, but thankfully, we were able to fully fund the Readiness to Learn program and ECEAP. We also approved legislation that will make prescription drugs more affordable for seniors, maintained necessary health care and in-home care for the elderly and disabled, and continued support for the developmentally disabled community.

This budget is responsible. It shows that the state can live within its means, and it reflects the tough times we're experiencing.

Together with the Joint Select Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs – of which I am the co-chair – we have worked hard to honor and enact legislation for our military personnel and veterans. I want to give a special thank-you to state, county, and city governments and businesses that employ our reservists and National Guard men and women.

Thank you for all your helpful feedback during the legislative session. I know that people are busy, so I have not scheduled any town hall meetings, but please feel free to call or e-mail me at home. Remember, I am always here for you.

Warmest regards,

Sen. Marilyn Rasmussen
2nd Legislative District

"Summit to Sound"

2nd Legislative District

Serving southern Pierce and eastern Thurston counties including McKenna, Rainier, Roy, Ft. Lewis, Spanaway, Orting, Graham, Yelm, Eatonville, Elbe, Ashford, Wilkeson, Carbonado, Frederickson and parts of Lacey.



General fund budget

The general fund budget pays for the day-to-day operation of state government and is funded mainly by the state sales tax.

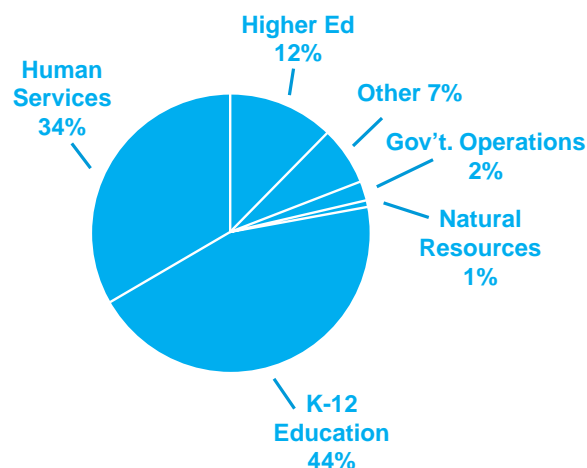
The best thing about the 2003-2005 budget can be summed up in three words: **No New Taxes**. It fills a \$2.6 billion hole without a general tax increase and protects our state's most vulnerable citizens, while restoring proposed health care cuts to children and the poor.

The budget:

- keeps 40,000 children receiving Medicaid health insurance;
- sets Basic Health Plan enrollment at 100,000 low-income recipients;
- gives home health care workers a 75 cent-an-hour raise; and
- **does not** rely on money from any expanded gambling.

I am disappointed that we had to **delay** the annual cost-of-living raises for K-12 teachers approved by voters in Initiative 732 **until 2005**. We also couldn't allocate as much money as I-728 required for reducing class sizes. These were important priorities to me. Unfortunately, both initiatives were approved during better economic times, and without a way to pay for them.

2003-2005 General Fund Expenditures



General fund revenues come from the retail sales tax (56%), B&O tax (18%), state property tax (12%), and other taxes and fees (14%).

However, to encourage new teachers to enter the profession, we increased the salaries of teachers within their first seven years of service.

Capital budget

The capital budget funds maintenance and construction of state buildings, public schools, colleges and universities, public lands and parks, primarily through the sale of bonds.

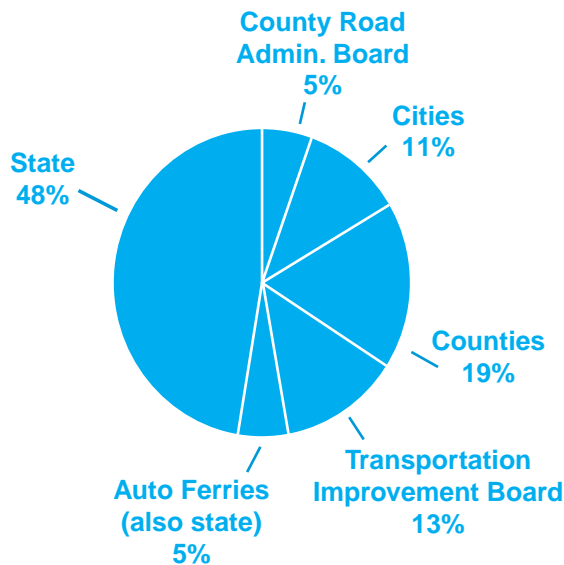
Our area will benefit from the following projects in the 2003-2005 capital budget, which must be matched by other sources of revenue.

- **Orting School District "Bridge for Kids" study** – \$250,000 for the joint project, between the Washington Emergency Management Division, the Orting School District, FEMA and Pierce County, to examine how best to evacuate our school kids in the event of a catastrophic lahar from Mount Rainier.
- **Rainier School in Buckley** – There is a critical need to maintain quality care for the developmentally disabled, so I was pleased that this wonderful school will receive \$10.6 million for a new 60-bed skilled nursing facility, renovation of two existing cottages and construction of two additional cottages. Although the Rainier School is in the neighboring 31st legislative district, it is part of our community, and this large expansion of this vital facility will benefit all of our communities.
- **Nisqually-Mashel State Park** – \$871,000 to purchase land at the confluence of the Mashel and the Nisqually rivers, which will be a tremendous addition to our state park system.
- **Orting Soldiers' Home** – \$1.1 million will help maintain this beautiful and spacious facility that serves the residential and nursing needs of veterans from all over our state.
- **Yelm Community Center** – \$400,000 will help construct this new center for seniors and all residents of the city of Yelm.
- **Eatonville** will receive \$150,000 for city projects.
- **Rainier** will get \$20,000 for its historical museum and community center.
- **Art Crate Field at Bethel High School** – \$500,000 will help renovate the field, which will provide better recreational opportunities for this heavily populated area.
- **Sprinker Skate Park** – \$275,000 for a 25,000 square-foot skate park.

Transportation budget

The two-year transportation budget is funded by the state's portion of the gas tax revenue, as well as proceeds from transportation licenses, permits and fees.

Current Gas Tax Spending



The state constitution requires that gas tax revenue be used only for highway purposes, including auto ferries.

The 2003-2005 transportation budget contains a 10-year investment plan that will allow some long-awaited highway construction to begin in the 2nd District.

- Nearly \$20 million is included for work on SR 161 between 176th to 234th, including traffic revisions for the proposed new high school in the Bethel School District.
- A new light for Graham Elementary at Meridian and 204th will be under construction later this year.
- \$9.3 million is included for SR 7 (Pacific Avenue) between SR 507 and SR 512. This highway is the second-most-traveled "High Accident Corridor" in the state. By contributing 15 percent of the cost of the project, the state leverages federal safety funds to help construct the necessary left-hand turn lanes. If we don't activate these federal safety dollars with our state's contribution, they will go elsewhere.
- \$15 million is included for early work on the proposed Cross Base Highway. Designated SR 704, the Cross Base Highway will be the first east-west corridor to serve south Pierce County and will reduce gridlock.

These important projects will mostly be funded by a 5-cent increase in the state gas tax. Gas tax revenue can only be used for highway purposes, so every time you fill up at the pump, you're helping build and maintain our state's roadways.



Gov. Gary Locke signs a proclamation recognizing state Grange Week. Sen. Rasmussen, to the left of Locke, is a 26-year member of the Ohop Grange.

Highlights

- **Defeat of charter schools** – The failure of the charter schools bill in the Legislature was a big win. Voters have rejected this proposal twice.
- **Prescription drug relief** – This session the Legislature agreed on a plan to protect our seniors and other residents from rising prescription drug costs. The measure makes Washington the **first state in the nation** to use its market clout to force drug manufacturers to negotiate for lower prices on prescriptions on behalf of the uninsured.
- **Military family tenancy** – I was pleased to sponsor legislation to ease the financial burden of rentals and leases for military personnel who are relocated.
- **Unemployment insurance reform** – The Legislature worked to reform our state's unemployment system to help all businesses remain viable in this state.
- **"WE CAN DO IT": Boeing tax incentives** – Recognizing the need to keep Boeing and its good-paying jobs here, the Legislature approved a package to enhance the state's bid for the 7E7 assembly. The Frederickson plant is already benefitting from Boeing's commitment to our state.

There were also some **disappointments**:

- **Tort reform** – This Legislature should have enacted some sort of civil liability reform – also known as tort reform – to establish controls on the civil damages that individuals, governments and businesses pay.
- **Medical malpractice** – Our community is losing many dedicated physicians because of the skyrocketing cost of malpractice insurance. We have a first-class health care system and we must take steps to ensure that the high cost of insurance doesn't undermine that quality of care.

Thanks to all my 2003 pages!



Sen. Rasmussen and pages Jessica Cabanillas and Logotaeao Kennach.

Helen Barnstien, Spanaway Junior High
 Jessica Cabanillas, Cedarcrest Junior High
 Tiffany Chauvin, Yelm High School
 Joe Crowder, Cedarcrest Junior High
 Andrew Jacobson,
 George Washington Bush Middle School
 Logotaeao Kennach, Cedarcrest Junior High
 Crystal Meyer, Cedarcrest Junior High
 Amy Miller, Thomas Jefferson High School
 Nicholas Miller, Cedarcrest Junior High
 Nichole Rhodes, Yelm High School
 Marty Walker, Spanaway Junior High
 Alex Bourdeau, Cedarcrest, Junior High
 Nolena Miller, Cedarcrest Junior High
 Sean Blankenship, Cedarcrest Junior High
 Mykel Racelis, Cedarcrest Junior High



My legislative assistants are Bob McDaniel of Olympia and Luanne Green of Puyallup.

**My staff and I are
 always here for you.
 Contact us anytime!**



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2nd Legislative District

Senator Marilyn Rasmussen



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